STOIC STUDIES

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011–4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

First published 1996
Reprinted 1999

Printed in Great Britain by Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham, Wiltshire

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Long, A. A.
Stoic studies / A. A. Long.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
ISBN 0 521 48263 1 (hardback)
1. Stoics. I. Title.
8528.L65 1996 95-38497
188 – dc20 CIP

ISBN 0 521 48263 1 hardback

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CHAPTER I

*Socrates in Hellenistic philosophy**

INTRODUCTION

In what sense did the Hellenistic philosophers see themselves as the heirs or critics of Socrates? Was Socrates, in their view, a philosopher on whom Plato was the decisive authority? What doctrines or strategies of Socrates were thoroughly alive in this period? These are the principal questions I shall be asking in this paper, particularly the third. To introduce them, and to set the scene, I begin with some general points, starting from two passages which present an image of Socrates at the beginning and at the end of the Hellenistic era. Here first are three lines from the *Silloi* of the Pyrrhonean Timon of Phlius:

> From these matters [i.e. the inquiry into nature] he turned aside, the people-chiselling moralising chatterer, the wizard of Greece, whose assertions were sharply pointed, master of the well-turned sneer, a pretty good ironist.[1]

Next Epictetus (*Discourses* IV.5.1–4):

> The honourable and good man neither fights with anyone himself, nor, so far as he can, does he let anyone else do so. Of this as of everything

* The original version of this chapter was first read to a meeting of the Southern Association for Ancient Philosophy, held at Cambridge University in September 1986; further versions of it were given at the University of Washington, at Cornell and at Berkeley. I am grateful for the discussion that took place on all these occasions, and particularly to Myles Burnyeat, who also gave me written comments. My principal indebtedness is to Gregory Vlastos, both for the stimulus of his published work and for the time we spent together discussing issues raised in the later part of the chapter. I also gratefully acknowledge the award of a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, which gave me the leisure to work on this subject.

[1] D.L. II.19 = Timon fr. 799 Lloyd-Jones/Parsons 1983: ἐκ δ' ἄρα τῶν ἀπέκλινεν ὁ λαξόος, | ἐννομολέσχης, | Ἑλλήνων ἐπαοιδός, ἀκριβολόγους ἀποφήνας, | μυκτὴρ ῥητορόμυκτος, ὑπαττικὸς εἰρωνευτής. For the interpretation of the opening phrase as an allusion to Socrates' disavowal of physics, cf. Sextus Empiricus, *M* VII.8 and Clem. Alex., *Strom.* I.14.63.3. Details of the whole passage are well discussed by Cortassa 1978, pp. 140–6.

else the life of Socrates is available to us as a model (*paradeigma*), who not only himself avoided fighting everywhere, but did not let others fight. Notice in Xenophon's *Symposium* how many fights he has resolved, and again how he put up with Thrasymachus, Polus and Callicles ... For he kept utterly secure in mind the thought that no one controls another's commanding-faculty (*hēgemonikon*).

In the *Discourses* of Epictetus, Socrates is *the* philosopher, a figure canonised more regularly and with more attention to detail than any other Stoic saint, whether Diogenes, Antisthenes or Zeno. The reader who knew the history of Greek philosophy only from Epictetus would form the impression that Stoicism was the philosophy of Socrates. He would also, by Epictetus' quotations from Plato and Xenophon, learn some of the salient moments of Socrates' life – his divine mission, trial, imprisonment etc. Moreover, what Epictetus says about the elenchus (I.26.17–18, II.1.32, II.26.4), the impossibility of *akrasia* (III.3.2–4), removal of the false conceit of knowledge (II.17.1, III.14.9), and definition (IV.1.41) reveals as deep a perception or utilisation of Socrates' philosophy as we find in any ancient thinker after Plato.

Socrates' presence in Epictetus' *Discourses* – which I must pass over here – could be the topic of a monograph.[2] But, to repeat, Epictetus' Socrates is the Stoics' patron || saint. He is no ironist, no sharp talker, no gadfly or sting-ray, no lover or symposiast or philosopher chiefly characterised by self-confessed ignorance (see n. 29 below). If, as I think certain, Epictetus has reflected hard on the Socratic writings of Plato and Xenophon, what he culls from those writings is an ideal of the philosophical life, as he himself conceives of it: 'Now that Socrates is dead, the memory of what he did or said when alive is no less or even more beneficial to men' (*Discourses* IV.1.169).

[2] See also I.9.22–4 (paraphrase of Plato, *Ap.* 29c as in III.1.19–21), I.12.3 (S. coupled with Odysseus), I.12.23 (S. was not in prison since he was there voluntarily), I.29.16–19 (Plato, *Ap.* 30c–d, as in II.2.15–18), I.29.65–6 (Plato, *Phd.* 116d), II.1.32 (S. *did* write, for self-examination), II.12.5 (How did S. behave? He forced his interlocutor to give him testimony, and had no need of any other; cf. *Gorg.* 474a), III.24.60–1 (S. behaving as a free man, dear to the gods), IV.1.159–60 (S.'s life as a paradigm of making everything subordinate to the laws, drawing on Xen. *Mem.* I.1.18), IV.4.21–2 (Plato, *Crito* 43d), IV.11.19–21 (S.'s toilet habits, rejecting Aristophanes, *Nub.* 103). Other refs. to Socrates in Plato and Xenophon: I.26.18, III.12.15 (Plato, *Ap.* 38a); II.1.15 (*Phd.* 77e, *Crito* 46c); II.2.8–9 (Xen. *Ap.* 2); II.5.18–20 (Plato, *Ap.* 26e); III.1.42 (*Alc.* 1, 131d); III.22.26 (Plato, *Clitopho* 407a–b); III.23.20–6 (Plato, *Ap.* 30c, 17c, *Crito* 46b); III.24.99 (Plato, *Ap.* 28d–29a); IV.1.41 (Xen. *Mem.* IV.6.1). Döring 1979, pp. 43–79, includes a chapter on Epictetus, but misses an opportunity to deal with the subject in a searching way; cf. Long 1981.

Four hundred years of Stoicism had contributed to the preservation and interpretation of that memory. According to Philodemus, the Stoics actually wanted to be called 'Socratics'.[3] In the later part of this paper I will show, albeit selectively, how their philosophy in its earliest phase represents a self-conscious attempt to fulfil that wish. But before approaching this topic and the role of Socrates in other Hellenistic schools, let us return to Timon. His lampooning purposes do not cast doubt on the historical interest of his remarks. Timon is a caricaturist who never fails to capture one or two recognisable and dominant features of the philosophers who form his subjects. Hence his evidence is valuable both for what it includes and for what it omits – and all the more so since Timon was writing from a non-doctrinaire perspective at a time when the new Hellenistic philosophies were still in the process of fashioning their identities. His brief remarks deserve closer scrutiny.

Timon associates Socrates' concentration upon ethics with his repudiation of the inquiry into nature. This, as we shall see in more detail shortly, is the most fundamental characteristic of Socrates in the doxographical tradition. I have the impression that Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I.I.11–16, rather than Plato's *Apology* or *Phaedo*, was the text that made this mark of Socrates so prominent. Timon's nicely coined term *ennomoleschēs* should mean not, as is standardly supposed, 'chatterer about laws', but someone who chatters in an *ennomos* way – i.e. a moralist.[4] The expression *Hellēnōn epaoidos*, 'Wizard of Greece', could owe something to Plato, *Charm.* 157a, a passage in which the soul's 'fair discourses' are described as *epōidai*; but it is probably a general reminiscence of the Aristophanic Socrates, to whom Timon is also indebted for *akribologous apophēnas*.[5] In his third line Timon focuses upon Socrates' powers of wit, censure, and irony.

The witty, sometimes caustic and ironical Socrates – Plato's Socrates, not Xenophon's – drops completely out of the early Stoic tradition.[6] The prominence of these features in Timon's vignette is interesting. As the mentor of Antisthenes, and, through him, of

[3] *De Stoicis* cols. 12–13, Σωκρατ[ι]κοὶ καλεῖσθαι θέ[λο]υσιν; see Giannantoni 1983–5, vol. II, Diogenes V B 126.

[4] Cf. Plato's use of *ennomos* in combination with *spoudaios*, *Rep.* IV, 424e.

[5] Cf. *Nub.* 130, where Strepsiades wonders how he will learn *logōn akribōn skindalamous*.

[6] Irony for the Stoics was exclusively a feature of the inferior man; cf. *SVF* III.630.

Diogenes and Crates, a censorious and caustic Socrates was cherished ‖ by the Cynics, with whom Timon felt some sympathy.[7] Even Epictetus, in his dialectical practice and choice of vivid metaphors, was implicitly following their lead. Unfortunately, the reliable evidence on Cynics is insufficient to provide much material for speculating on the extent to which they had any theoretical views about the connexion between Socratic irony and the way philosophical discourse should be conducted. On this, as on everything else, Socrates was attacked by the Epicureans (see below). But irony cannot be said to constitute a dominant feature of Socrates when we are considering his positive role in the main stream of Hellenistic philosophy.

From our perspective, indelibly coloured by Plato's Socrates, this is remarkable. But the irony of Socrates, together with all the other glittering characteristics of his discourse and argumentative style – what the Epicurean Colotes witheringly calls his *alazones logoi* (Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1117d) – was inimitable and quite inseparable from Plato's dialogues. Xenophon's often stodgy Socrates is no ironist. Though Socrates' philosophical principles clamoured for replication and interpretation, there could be no dissemination of the whole man, on the basis of all the sources, either as a paradigm on whom to model one's life or as a more abstract set of theories. Socrates was too complex, too individualistically contoured, to be appropriated in full by any single philosophical school. One of his closest approximations, Diogenes of Sinope, earned the description from Plato, 'a Socrates gone mad' (D.L. VI.54).

Timon's Socrates and that of Epictetus are composite but partial portraits, derived both from books and from Socrates' philosophical afterlife. A hundred years after Socrates' death – the time of the foundation of the Garden and the Stoa – a detailed oral tradition concerning the historical figure can probably be excluded. Even if stories about the man himself were passed on by word of mouth, the Socrates of my inquiry is the subject of the 'Socratic discourses' composed by his associates, Plato, Xenophon, Antisthenes, Aeschines. In general, it seems, neither Hellenistic philosophers with an allegiance to Socrates, nor biographers and doxographers, addressed the 'Socratic problem' of modern schol-

[7] I discuss Timon's Cynic leanings in Long 1978a. See also Brancacci 1981.

arship. If they were aware of discrepancies between Xenophon's accounts and Plato's dialogues, these were not regarded as any reason for having to prefer one account to the other. Control of the material, we can conjecture, was determined not by preconceptions about the superiority in historicity or philosophical sophistication of Plato to Xenophon, but by the need to derive from both of them a well-founded philosophical paradigm that would be internally coherent and consistent with the Hellenistic philosopher's own stance.

Timon's observation that Socrates concentrated on ethics and repudiated physics is the best starting-point for viewing the Hellenistic philosophers' attitude and approach to the great man. The point had already been made in similar brevity by Aristotle: 'Socrates occupied himself with ethics and not at all with nature as a whole' (*Metaph.* A 6, 987b1–2); and it would become the most commonly repeated Socratic characteristic in the doxographical tradition. Here, for instance, is the pseudo-Galenic article on Socrates:

> The original philosophers opted only for the study of nature and made this the goal of their philosophy. Socrates, who succeeded them much later, said that this was inaccessible to people (for he regarded secure cognition of non-evident things as most difficult), and that investigation of how one might best conduct one's life and avoid bad things and get the greatest possible share of fine things was more useful. Believing this more useful he ignored the study of nature ... and devoted his thought to an ethical disposition that would distinguish good and bad, right and wrong ... Observing that authorities in these matters would need to be persuasive and would || achieve this if they were evidently good at using dialectical arguments in dealings with their interlocutors, he elaborated dialectic.[8]

The incorporation of dialectic in this account will concern us later. For the present I call attention to the passage from Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.1.11–16, which by the Hellenistic period had become

[8] Ps.-Galen, *Hist. phil.* ap. Diels 1879, p. 597, 1–17: τῶν ἐξ ἀρχῆς φιλοσοφησάντων φυσιολογεῖν μόνον προελομένων καὶ τοῦτο τέλος τῆς κατ' αὐτοὺς φιλοσοφίας πεποιημένων ἐπιγεγονὼς πολλοῖς ὕστερον χρόνοις Σωκράτης τοῦτο μὲν ἀνέφικτον ἔφησεν ἀνθρώποις ὑπάρχειν (τῶν γὰρ ἀδήλων κατάληψιν βεβαίαν λαβεῖν τῶν χαλεπωτάτων ἐνόμισε), τὸ δὲ ζητεῖν ὅπως ἄμεινον διάγοι τις, καὶ τῶν μὲν κακῶν ἀποτραπείη τῶν δὲ καλῶν ὡς πλείστων μετάσχοι, τοῦτο μᾶλλον συνοίσειν. καὶ τοῦτο νομίσας χρησιμώτερον τῆς μὲν φυσιολογίας ἠμέληκεν ... ἠθικὴν δέ τινα διάθεσιν ἐπινενοηκὼς διαγνωστικὴν ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ κακῶν αἰσχρῶν τε καὶ καλῶν ... κατιδὼν δὲ ὅτι δεήσει τοὺς τούτων προεστησομένους εὐπειθείας μετέχειν, τοῦτο δ' ἂν ὑπάρξειεν εἰ λόγοις διαλεκτικοῖς φαίνοιντο πρὸς τοῦς προσιόντας καλῶς κεχρημένοι, καὶ τὴν διαλεκτικὴν ἐπινενόηκεν.

the principal authority for Socrates' exclusively ethical orientation. Xenophon is defending Socrates from the charge of impiety. He supports this by saying that Socrates differed from the majority of other philosophers in not studying the nature of everything and showed up such people as fools. Did they come to the study of nature thinking they had an adequate understanding of human affairs, or did they think they were acting properly in neglecting the human and studying the divine? Socrates found it amazing that they did not find the indiscoverability of these things obvious, and cited in support of this the failure of scientific pundits to reach agreement with one another. Xenophon then develops Socrates' exploitation of discrepant opinions with a brief survey of pre-Socratic theories and indicates his indictment of the uselessness of such inquiries. Finally, says Xenophon, Socrates himself was constantly discussing human affairs, investigating the nature of piety, justice and other ethical concepts: he regarded people who knew them as noble and good, and thought that those who did not would rightly be called slavish (*andrapodōdēs*).

If this passage strikes us as a travesty of the Platonic Socrates, it possibly captures the Hellenistic Socrates more aptly than any single text of Plato. In essence Xenophon is describing the Socrates whom Antisthenes, Aristippus and Diogenes claimed to be following, and whom the Stoic Aristo would take as his model.[9] Probably all of these, like Xenophon's Socrates, connected their interest in ethics to the repudiation of any concern with physics. The sometimes hectoring tone of the passage – e.g., 'slavish' (*andrapodōdēs*) – is redolent of Cynic moralising. Notice too the attribution to Socrates of 'disagreement' as an argumentative strategy for disposing of the physicists' credentials; Socrates is already being represented as a sceptic, so far as non-ethical knowledge is concerned. Ethical expertise, however, is precisely his province. His general confession of ignorance is never mentioned by Xenophon. Nor does that feature of Socrates seem to belong to the most basic Hellenistic portrait. Like his dialectic, it is a characteristic to be mentioned or omitted according to the kind of paradigm his inheritors want him to instantiate.

Ancient writers were well aware of the fact that Socrates, as

[9] For Aristippus' repudiation of mathematics, dialectic and physics, cf. Giannantoni 1983–85, vol. I, Aristippus IV A 170, 172. Antisthenes, at least as viewed by the Cynics, disparaged the study of *grammata* (D.L. VI.103).

here portrayed in Xenophon, did not square well with the Socrates of Plato's later dialogues (according to modern chronology) or even with some of Xenophon's remarks elsewhere about his theological interests. By the end of the Hellenistic period it is a commonplace that Plato attributed to Socrates interests and theories which were entirely Plato's own (cf. Cicero, *Rep.* 1.15–16). The same is true implicitly as early as Aristotle. Only in late || antiquity do we find Socrates credited with Platonist metaphysics (e.g., by ps.-Plutarch, *Plac.* 878b). The absence of an ancient Socratic problem on this issue will only occasion surprise or difficulty if Plato's dialogues are treated as the standard reference-point for Socrates' philosophy, taking priority over the writings of Xenophon, Antisthenes and others. In fact Plato, or what we call Plato's Socratic dialogues, appears to have been widely regarded as neither a more nor a less authentic witness to Socrates than Xenophon's writings.

The correctness of this last point, if it is correct, should not be interpreted as reducing the importance of Plato's Socrates in the eyes of pre-eminent philosophers such as Zeno, Chrysippus and Arcesilaus. In the later parts of this paper, I hope to show that it was Plato's Socrates, rather than any other, that stimulated serious philosophy, as we understand it today. But for the fourth century BC and for less demanding readers Xenophon had two advantages over Plato. First, it was easier to discover what the opinions of his Socrates were. Secondly, Xenophon's readers, in Antisthenes and Diogenes, had living embodiments of the self-mastery (*enkrateia*) which he so constantly emphasises as Socrates' dominant characteristic. No ancient writer, I think, ever regarded the *life* of Plato as emblematic of Socrates. It was not too difficult, on the other hand, to think of the Cynics as his genuine if one-sided imitators.[10]

Such a perception will have been encouraged by the activities of the Academy immediately after Plato's death and by the direction and style of Aristotle's philosophy. If Plato's later philosophy was readily seen as a considerable departure from that of Socrates, his immediate successors can hardly have struck their contemporaries as Socratic in any sense. Epictetus' Socrates, however Stoicised, is utterly recognisable as the man whose life and arguments and moral passion constituted an ethical revolution. Aristotle, by con-

[10] Cf. Grote 1885, vol. III, p. 505: 'Antisthenes and his disciple Diogenes were in many respects closer approximations to Socrates than Plato or any of the other Socratic companions.'

trast, is decidedly reticent on all of this. His interest in Plato of course ensures that 'our' Socrates is an important presence implicitly in the ethical treatises; and there is the well-known handful of passages which report and criticise Socrates by name. But Aristotle scarcely even hints at the moral significance of Socrates, as we moderns perceive it, or as it was perceived in the Hellenistic period. In a sense, we learn more about Socrates from this brief remark by Plutarch: 'Socrates was the first to show that life accommodates philosophy at every time and part and in all states and affairs without qualification.'[11]

Possibly Aristotle gave a more rounded account of Socrates in some of his exoteric writings.[12] Even so, the absence of anything comparable from his ethical treatises is remarkable. Did Aristotle himself help to set the tone for the hostile biographies of Socrates that Aristoxenus and other Peripatetics wrote, and that the Stoic Panaetius later contested? The question cannot be answered; but the fact that it can be posed at all is relevant to our inquiry. Socrates was not universally admired by Hellenistic philosophers. Before turning to his positive role in Stoicism and Academic Scepticism, something must be said about his detractors. ‖

CRITICISM OF SOCRATES IN HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

We have no record, so far as I know, concerning any views of Theophrastus on Socrates. That silence may at least suggest substantial lack of interest.[13] Some of his fellow Peripatetics and successors were more outspoken. According to Porphyry, Aristoxenus' life of Socrates was more malevolent than the accusations of Meletus and Anytus (fr. 51 Wehrli). Most famously, it made out Socrates to be a bigamist, and also described him as the boyfriend of Archelaus. The charge of bigamy, repeated by other Peripatetics – Callisthenes, Demetrius of Phalerum and Satirus (Athenaeus XIII, 555d) – acquired sufficient currency to provoke the Stoic Panaetius into writing what Plutarch calls an adequate refuta-

[11] *Moral.* 796e: πρῶτος ἀποδείξας τὸν βίον ἅπαντι χρόνῳ καὶ μέρει καὶ πάθεσι καὶ πράγμασιν ἁπλῶς ἅπασι φιλοσοφίαν δεχόμενον.

[12] Cf. *On philosophy* fr. 1 Ross (Plutarch, *Moral.* 1118c), in which Aristotle reported the Delphic 'know yourself' as the starting-point of Socrates' philosophy.

[13] I have noticed only two inconsequential references to Socrates in the material collected by Fortenbaugh 1984: L 74 B, and L 106.

tion.[14] Such tittle-tattle, if it were confined to Aristoxenus, would merit no further comment. The fact that it became a common Peripatetic practice suggests a more studied attempt to undermine the ethical integrity of Socrates' life. We may probably conclude that a good many Peripatetics sought to combat the tendency of the other Socratic schools to set up Socrates as the paradigm of how a philosophical life should be lived. The more Socrates' exclusive concentration on ethics was stressed, the less at home he could be in the research environment of the Lyceum.

Socrates' repudiation of physics and theological speculation was one, but only one, of the many charges levelled against him by the Epicureans. Thanks to Knut Kleve, evidence of the range and intensity of this Epicurean criticism has now been thoroughly marshalled.[15] In the case of Epicurus himself it amounts to no more than an objection to Socratic irony.[16] Yet if Epicurus was fairly restrained in his remarks about Socrates, his immediate followers were not. From Metrodorus and Idomeneus, extending through Zeno of Sidon and Philodemus down to Diogenes of Oenoanda, a tradition of hostility to Socrates was established that is virulent even by the standards of ancient polemic. In their writings, Socrates was portrayed as the complete anti-Epicurean – a sophist, a rhetorician, a sceptic, and someone whose ethical inquiries turn human life into chaos.

Kleve (1983, pp. 249–50) explains this unmitigated hostility with the observation that Socrates and the Epicureans represent 'two different human types'. By this he seems to mean that their views of the world were diametrically opposed. However, this cannot be a sufficiently penetrating explanation. Both Socrates and Epicurus were in the business of curing people's souls. From Xenophon's Socrates especially, the Epicureans could have derived excellent support for much of their ethical practice – their concern with frugality, self-sufficiency, control of vain and unnecessary desires.[17] That they chose instead to attack aspects of Socrates' ethics, and

[14] Plutarch, *Aristides* 335c–d (= Panaetius fr. 132 van Straaten), which includes Hieronymus of Rhodes as another of the Peripatetic scandalmongers: πρὸς μὲν οὖν τούτους ἱκανῶς ὁ Παναίτιος ἐν τοῖς περὶ Σωκράτους ἀντείρηκεν.

[15] Cf. Kleve 1983.

[16] Cicero, *Brutus* 292 (Usener 231).

[17] Socrates' hardiness and self-control: Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.1, 1.2.14, 1.3.5, 1.5.4–6, 1.6.1–3; Socrates made those of his associates who had *ponēras epithumias* give them up: ibid. 1.2.64.

to treat him as a thoroughgoing sceptic, indicates a view of Socrates as transmitted by contemporary Stoics and Academics.

Early Epicureans wrote books against various Platonic dialogues – *Euthyphro,* || *Lysis, Euthydemus, Gorgias.*[18] The latter two, especially the protreptic passage in the *Euthydemus,* were texts which the Stoics seem to have particularly prized (see below). It is legitimate to guess that much of the basis for Epicurean criticism of Socrates should be sought in the central role he was now playing as a paradigm for their Stoic rivals. This suggestion, or rather the general probability that Epicurean attacks on Socrates had a contemporary rather than a historical target, is confirmed by Colotes' criticism in his books against the *Lysis* and the *Euthydemus.* There he maintained that Socrates ignored what is self-evident (*enarges*) and suspended judgement (*epochōs prattein*).[19] Here Socrates, *au pied de la lettre,* has been turned into a prototype of the Academic Arcesilaus. *epochē* at this date points specifically to the Academic sceptics; and the Stoic Aristo commented on Arcesilaus' interest in arguments against *enargeia.*[20] Arcesilaus and the Cyrenaics (another Socratic school) were the two contemporary targets of Colotes' book, *Conformity to the doctrines of the other philosophers makes life impossible.*[21]

The Stoics and the sceptical Academics were the Epicureans' main professional rivals.[22] Both sets of opponents laid claim to being followers of Socrates. We have yet to see what they meant by this claim, and how, being rivals themselves, they could appropriate a dogmatic Socrates in the one case and a sceptical Socrates in the other. For the present it is sufficient to note their joint concern to establish their identity as Socratics. This justifies the suggestion that Epicurean criticism of Socrates be seen, at least in part, as a means of undercutting the most obvious alternative

[18] For Colotes' books *Against Plato's Lysis* and *Against Plato's Euthydemus,* cf. Crönert 1906, pp. 163–70. Colotes also wrote against the myth of Er in *Republic* x (cf. Plutarch, *Moral.* XIV, B. Einarson and P. De Lacy (edd.), pp. 154–5). Metrodorus wrote *Against Plato's Euthyphro* (Philodemus, *Piet.*, col. 77, 1ff.), and Zeno of Sidon, *Against Plato's Gorgias* (fr. 25, Angeli-Colaizzo (*Cronache Ercolanesi.* 9, 1979, 80)). Nor was it just Plato's Socrates that was attacked. In his *Peri oikonomias,* Philodemus objected point by point to the Socrates of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus.* On all of this, cf. Kleve 1983.

[19] For the Greek text, cf. Mancini, 1976, pp. 61–6; and see also Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1118a.

[20] D.L. VII.162–3. Cf. my remarks in Long 1986b, p. 442.

[21] Cf. Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1120c.

[22] They fall outside the scope of Sedley's article (1976), which is largely concerned with the attitude of Epicurus himself to earlier philosophers and to his elder contemporaries.

models of the philosophical life – Socrates as interpreted by Stoics and Academics.

SOCRATES IN THE ACADEMY OF POLEMO AND ARCESILAUS

Arcesilaus pinned his credentials as one who suspends judgement about everything, and his dialectical practice, on Socrates, and claimed that Plato's dialogues should be read in this light. Cicero, *De oratore* III.67, gives us this report:

> Arcesilaus, the pupil of Polemo, was the first to derive this principal point from various of Plato's books and from Socratic discourses – that there is nothing certain which the senses or the mind can grasp. He is said to have belittled every criterion of mind and sense, and begun the practice – though it was absolutely Socratic – not of indicating his own opinion, but of speaking against what anyone stated as his opinion.[23] ||

Cicero emphasises Arcesilaus' originality in this reading of Plato and Socrates. He was probably right to do so. What, thanks to Gregory Vlastos, we are becoming accustomed to calling Socrates' 'disavowal of knowledge$_C$' – i.e., Socrates' disclaimer to possess *certainty* of any truth whatsoever – must have been chiefly associated, when it was noted at all, with the Platonic Socrates.[24] Xenophon's Socrates, like that of Aristippus and the Cynics, repudiates any interest in the inquiry into nature; and Arcesilaus will have appreciated the passage (mentioned above) from *Memorabilia* I.1.12–15 in which Socrates supports his indifference to physics by exploiting disagreement between natural philosophers. But I find little evidence that fourth-century interpreters of Socrates outside Plato, with some support from Aeschines Socraticus, attributed to him any scepticism about his capacity for knowledge in general, or that they took his ethical doctrines to involve seriously-held reservations about his certainty that they were true and demonstrable.[25]

[23] Arcesilas primum, qui Polemonem audierat, ex variis Platonis libris sermonibusque Socraticis hoc maxime arripuit, nihil esse certi quod aut sensibus aut animo percipi possit; quem ferunt ... aspernatum esse omne animi sensusque iudicium primumque instituisse – quamquam id fuit Socraticum maxime – non quid ipse sentiret ostendere, sed contra id quod quisque se sentire dixisset disputare. Cf. also *Fin.* II.2; V.10.

[24] Vlastos (1985) argues, with great force and originality, that Plato's Socrates disavows certain or infallible knowledge of anything (knowledge$_C$), but avows elenctic or fallible knowledge of propositions arrived at and tested by his elenctic method (knowledge$_E$).

[25] Two fragments of Aeschines Socraticus should be mentioned. In fr. 3 Krauss, Socrates says he would convict himself of considerable *mōria* if he attributed any help he had been

Antisthenes said that happiness needs nothing in addition to virtue except Socratic strength; virtue pertains to actions, and needs neither a quantity of arguments nor lessons.[26] That this strength included anything like Socrates' disavowal of certainty, as elucidated by Vlastos, is a refinement we may surely exclude.

Other pieces of evidence point in the same direction. Aristotle, once and very briefly, mentions Socrates' 'confession of ignorance', in explaining why he asked questions but did not answer them (*Soph. el.* 34 183b7–8). The complete absence of the same point from all the ethical contexts in which Aristotle discusses Socrates' theses on virtue and knowledge suggests that he did not regard the confession of ignorance as a constitutive feature of Socrates' philosophy, or as something which cast any doubt on the certainty Socrates attached to these doctrines.

Timon, as we saw, makes Socrates into a non-physicist, but he does not treat him as a proto-sceptic. His readiness to praise Xenophanes, Democritus and Protagoras for their sceptical leanings suggests that he would have enrolled Socrates too, if his self-confessed ignorance was already being treated as a fundamental characteristic.[27] In fact, outside the Academy the tradition of the ignorant Socrates never seems to have been taken very seriously. It is mentioned late, and inconsequentially, in Diogenes Laertius' life of Socrates (II.32), and forms no part of the pseudo-Galenic doxography (cited above). Writers from later antiquity, if they mention this feature at all, generally follow the lead of Antiochus, who had removed Socrates from Arcesilaus' list of sceptical predecessors by treating his confession of ignorance as ironical.[28] ||

My final reason for making Arcesilaus the effective creator of the totally sceptical Socrates is a belief that this feature must post-

to Alcibiades to any *technē* rather than to 'divine dispensation'; and in fr. 4, he says he has no knowledge of any *mathēma* which he could teach a man and thereby help him. According to Demetrius, *De eloc.* 297, the properly Socratic method of instruction, convicting the interlocutor of ignorance, was especially imitated by Aeschines and Plato.

[26] Antisthenes ap. D.L. VI.11: αὐτάρκη δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν, μηδενὸς προσδεομένην ὅτι μὴ Σωκρατικῆς ἰσχύος· τήν τ' ἀρετὴν τῶν ἔργων εἶναι, μήτε λόγων πλείστων δεομένην μήτε μαθημάτων.

[27] See Lloyd-Jones/Parsons 1983 fr. 779 (Protagoras), fr. 820 (Democritus), and for Timon's praise of Xenophanes, Sextus Empiricus, *PH* I.223.

[28] Cicero, *Acad.* II.15 (cf. Quintilian IX.2.46, Dio Chrysost. XII.14, Themistius 21, 259b). In *Acad.* I.16, however, Varro (speaking for Antiochus) reports Socrates' practice of 'saying that he knew nothing except that very thing', and says that he surpassed everyone else in thinking that he knew nothing – an opinion in which he consistently persisted. This

date the beginnings of Stoicism. It seems to me most unlikely that Zeno and Aristo would have modelled their philosophy so closely on Socrates if his confession of ignorance was already a dominant part of the standard characterisation. At the beginning of the Hellenistic period, what Socrates most prominently stood for, I think, was the thesis that virtue is knowledge and vice is ignorance. Or, as Diogenes Laertius' doxography states (II.31), drawing on Plato, *Euthydemus* 281e, 'he said that only one thing is good, knowledge, and only one thing is bad, ignorance'. The Socratic literature, taken as a whole, must have made it extraordinarily difficult to apply these propositions to a completely ignorant Socrates, who would thus by implication be vicious and in possession of all that is bad.[29]

In accounting for Arcesilaus' scepticism, we do best to take Cicero's report seriously. Read literally, it tells us that what drew Arcesilaus powerfully in this direction was in fact his own original interpretation of the Platonic Socrates – the Socrates who, even at the moment of concluding an ethical argument in the *Gorgias* 508e6–509a7, which he describes as 'clamped down and bound by arguments of iron and adamant', confesses that he does not speak as one who has knowledge.[30] Arcesilaus' scepticism, on this view, was actually the outcome of his reading of Plato's Socrates – a fundamentally new reading – and not something he foisted on Socrates and Plato because he was already a sceptic. This tallies with the well-known passage from Cicero's *Academica* I.44–5, where Cicero treats Arcesilaus' scepticism as a response to the obscurity of the things that led Socrates and earlier philosophers to a *confessio ignorationis*. In that context, Arcesilaus, according to Cicero, took Socrates to have had knowledge of just one

passage, unlike *Acad.* II.15, seems to reflect Antiochus' sympathy for Arcesilaus' interpretation of Socrates (*Acad.* I.45); which, of course, he will have fully endorsed during his own sceptical phase; cf. the report of Socrates' total disapproval of an *ars quaedam philosophiae et rerum ordo et descriptio disciplinae* (ibid. 17), which is hard to reconcile with Antiochus' own mature conception of philosophy, or his bracketing of Plato and Socrates in *Acad.* II.15.

[29] Epictetus' Socrates *knows* various moral principles, yet 'never said that he knew or taught anything' (*Discourses* III.5.17; cf. III.23.22). Andrea Nightingale has suggested to me that this may be read as an alternative both to the sceptical Academics' Socrates and to the ironically ignorant Socrates of Antiochus. Epictetus interestingly differentiates Socrates from Diogenes and Zeno, viewing Socrates' special province as the elenchus, Diogenes' as reproof, and Zeno's that of instruction and doctrine (*Discourses* III.21.18–19).

[30] For the interpretation of Socrates' procedure here, cf. Vlastos 1985, pp. 20–2.